

HONORING THE LIFE AND DEDICATED SERVICE OF COLONEL ROBERT "BOB" W. GATES, USAF RET.

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 8, 2014

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on August 9, 2014, Northwest Florida and our Nation lost a warrior—Colonel Robert "Bob" W. Gates, USAF Retired. Colonel Gates, a devoted family man and decorated veteran, honorably served as a member of the Armed Forces for over thirty years. He was a member of the Greatest Generation and served in three wars. I am humbled to rise and pay tribute to his life, his unwavering commitment to service, and his dedication to our Nation's heroes and their loved ones.

Born in Bradley, South Dakota on January 23, 1919, Colonel Gates joined the Army Air Corps, prior to World War II, and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force in April 1942. His various tours of duty included commander of the 88th Troop Carrier Squadron, a C-47 squadron that dropped paratroopers over Normandy on D-Day; commander of the 4087th Air Transport Group, tasked with providing air supply for the Distant Early Warning Line across the Arctic; and commander of the Huron Task Force, which established the Huron radar sites on the Greenland Ice Cap. Following his command of the 6200th Material Wing at Clark AFB in the Philippines, Colonel Gates became the first commander of the 1st Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field, located in the Florida Panhandle and home to the Air Force Special Operations Command, before serving as the Inspector General for the 13th Air Force.

During his distinguished career spanning three decades, Colonel Gates served in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War and logged over 16,000 flight hours in several aircraft, including his assignment to fly entertainer Bob Hope and crew on a USO tour around the world. Colonel Gates received a Presidential Citation from President Franklin Roosevelt and was awarded the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal, the Army Commendation medal, the French Croix-de-Guerre, and the USO Spirit of Hope Award for his lifetime contributions to the USO. Under his leadership, the 1st Special Operations Wing was bestowed the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, and Hurlburt Field was named the Most Improved Base in the Tactical Air Command.

Upon his retirement from the Air Force in 1972, Colonel Gates began a career in real estate and was integral in the construction of the Bob Hope Village, which provides home and care for Air Force widows. From 1978 to 1983, Colonel Gates served as mayor of Fort Walton Beach. He was a founder and charter member of The American Air Museum in Britain and the Air Armament Museum at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, and was a member of various community and veterans organizations, including the Elks, Daedalians, Krewe of Bowlegs, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Air Commando Association, which inducted Colonel Gates into its Hall of Fame.

To many, Colonel Gates will be remembered for his devotion to his country and com-

munity, and to his family and friends, a loving family man with a great sense of humor. Without question, Colonel Gates lived a life full of service and has earned our Nation's highest respect and gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is a privilege for me to honor Colonel Robert W. Gates' lifetime of service. My wife Vicki and I extend our prayers and sincere condolences to his children—Robert, Bill, Michael, Kimberly, and Kathleen; ten grandchildren—Paula, Robert W. Gates III, Steve, Matthew, Sarah, Mary Kathryn, Peyton, Austin, Trevor, and Kendall; ten great-grandchildren; his loyal companion, Lucky, his rescued dog; and the entire Gates family.

THANKING MY STAFF

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 8, 2014

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, it has been my honor and privilege to serve in this body for 34 years. I have come to the floor countless times over the years to speak out and help give a voice to the voiceless for humanitarian causes, to raise national and international policy issues, such as getting our nation's spending under control, bringing attention to national security threats, like terrorism and cyberattacks, and focusing on ways to protect children and families from the scourge of legalized gambling. I also have raised issues important to the people of the 10th District of Virginia, such as improving transportation, preserving historic sites and educating the public about health threats from Lyme disease.

Today, though, I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the dozens of men and women who have been on my staff over the years. As every Member knows, our jobs in the people's House would be next to impossible without the staff that works with us. I certainly would not have been able to accomplish so many of the projects and public policy initiatives I have been able to do without them by my side.

And in all honesty, if it were not for some loyal and dedicated staffers who stuck with me during my first term—when the growing pains of a new congressional office are the toughest—I am not sure I would have been re-elected early in my career.

I want to single out my first press secretary, Stephanie Bolick, who later became my chief of staff, or as we called it back then, my "AA" or administrative assistant. She may have been among the first women in a Hill office in the early 1980s to break that glass ceiling. I was blessed to find Stephanie, who helped me focus my work and build a foundation of public service. She was wise beyond her years and I am forever grateful to her for her counsel and for being there from the start.

I have been fortunate to have two long-tenured chiefs of staff. Charlie White was my top aide for 14 years, until cancer took his life in the summer of 2000. A retired Navy captain and submariner, Charlie had a heart of service and not only helped manage my office, but became a dear friend. A humble man, he had a way of putting everyone around him at ease. Even in the pain of illness, he inspired us by his grace. Charlie was a "Johnny Appleseed" kind of a guy. He was a mentor to young staff-

ers and sowed seeds of goodness and kindness to scatter to all those we meet in our lives.

I believe it was providential when Dan Scandling followed Charlie as my chief of staff. Dan had been the top aide to my Virginia colleague Herb Bateman, who died suddenly just four months before he was to retire from the House. Dan was just the right person at the right time. A trusted and loyal adviser and friend, he has been with me since late 2000.

When I would tell Dan that we needed to jump on a plane and get to a place in the world where people were suffering or war was imminent, he made it happen. He was there with me to document the trip in photos and write the report that I would share with House colleagues, leadership and the administration to help get the ball rolling to focus attention on a humanitarian cause. A superb journalist, Dan also has served as my press spokesman. He is indefatigable and a true professional and I cannot thank him enough for his counsel and public service.

I was a former staffer, both on Capitol Hill and in the executive branch. I know the daily grind—writing mail, stuffing envelopes, and answering phone calls from disgruntled constituents. Staffers are consumed by long hours with modest pay. Yet I also know how rewarding this job can be. So many of my staff over the years have told me that being in a position to help make people's lives better was really what counted the most.

I always said I wanted a staff that was on par with the late Senator Ted Kennedy's top-notch staff. There is no doubt in my mind that my staff was. I have no hesitation in saying I have had the best staff on Capitol Hill.

I have tried to treat my staff as family, whether they worked for me for only a year before heading off to law school or graduate school, or stayed with me for many years. I actually had two staffers who worked for me for more than 25 years. Judy McCary and Janet Shaffron served as the backbone of my office.

Judy was my longtime District director and worked more cases, particularly immigration cases, than you can count. Through the years I could rarely go anywhere in my District without someone thanking me for something Judy or someone else on my District staff did to solve a problem.

Judy, and all my District staff, were tireless—and continue to be tireless—advocates for the people of the 10th District, regardless of political strife. When you called my District staff with a problem, it didn't matter if you were a Democrat, an Independent or a Republican. You were a constituent and they were there to help.

Janet Shaffron was my legislative director for 28 years. She had an encyclopedic knowledge of every issue and every vote and was responsible for compiling my complete annual voting record, which I published for constituents. She was a whiz at parliamentary procedure and an extremely gifted writer and editor. Nothing rattled Janet. I don't think she ever had a bad day—even when she wore two hats and filled in as chief of staff, helping hold the staff together when Charlie became ill. My Washington staff adored Janet. She always was willing to help with a letter or speech. She was a mentor and always knew when to give a young staffer an encouraging word. And she